

## PROGRAM REPORT

### Nonpoint Source Program

#### Historical Perspective

In 1975, the Basin Plan recognized and described both point and nonpoint source problems. With adoption of the Clean Water Act, major state and federal grant programs were initiated to focus attention on controlling point source discharges. Therefore, it is no surprise that for the next 20 years the Regional Board concentrated on point sources. These concentrated efforts have for the most part been extremely effective in reducing point source impairments. Over the same period, the Regional Board tried, with limited resources, to address some of the most serious nonpoint source problems. These were problems associated with agricultural operations (including confined animal facilities), mining and timber harvest activities and local water quality problems associated with erosion from development and pollution from septic tanks.

#### Current Status

The overall statewide nonpoint source program is described in State Board's Nonpoint Source Pollution Control Program (adopted in 1988) and a Nonpoint Source Program Plan that was released in 2000. The Program Plan was developed, primarily, to bring our nonpoint source program into compliance with federal Coastal Zone Act Reauthorization Amendment requirements. The Program Plan covers 15 years of implementation from 1998-2013 and workplans for the second five years (FY 2003-08) have been completed.

Currently, nonpoint source pollution is the leading cause of water quality impairments in California. The Regional Board has several programs that are implemented in a coordinated fashion to address nonpoint source problems. Following is a brief description of the more significant programs and how activities in the programs are coordinated to achieve the statewide goals of the nonpoint source program.

- US EPA Funded NPS Program – For the past few years, Region 5 has received about 5 PYs annually to work on nonpoint source problems. Work is described in an annual workplan. In general, about half of the personnel budget is spent on program management and managing grants that are given out as part of the program (mostly grants to stakeholder groups). The other half is spent working with stakeholder groups on issues that are of mutual interest and on specific high priority nonpoint source issues identified in the WMI Chapter or state Nonpoint Source Plan. For example, last fiscal year, staff worked on watershed assessments, coordinating the nutrient TMDL with the mercury TMDL in Clear Lake, beginning assessment of pathogens in the Delta, and developing a framework for assessing beneficial uses of waterbodies in predominantly agricultural areas. This fiscal year, staff will develop a framework with Lake County to implement the mercury TMDL for Clear Lake and initiate the nutrient TMDL that is under development. In addition, staff will gather information on agricultural dominated water bodies to assist our TMDL and agricultural waiver program efforts and meet our Bay Protection and Toxic Cleanup Program commitments.
- All the TMDLs under development address nonpoint source problems. A separate Executive Officer's report in January will outline this program. Staff helps stakeholder groups understand the relationship of their work with the TMDLs.
- Agricultural discharges are considered to be nonpoint source. Region 5 addresses pollutants associated with discharges from irrigated agriculture with the Conditional Waiver of Waste Discharge Requirements for Discharges from Irrigated Lands Program. In addition, specific regulatory programs are in place for controlling selenium in the San Joaquin River and Tulare Basin and discharges from rice culture operations in the Sacramento River watershed.
- The State Board competitive grant program to help improve water quality due to NPS pollution has been funded for the past ten years with US EPA Nonpoint Source Funds. The State received about \$5 million a year that funded stream restoration, erosion control, citizen monitoring and education and other locally derived projects. In recent years, bonds have provided significantly more funds for locally led efforts. A status report on the grant program was provided in last month's Executive Officer's report.
- Other nonpoint source concerns, such as timber operation, confined animal operations, and hydromodification (i.e 401 certifications) are addressed by separate programs. Status reports on these will be provided in future Executive Officer reports.